

PACIFIC WEEKLY

A WESTERN JOURNAL OF FACT AND OPINION

JUNE 14, 1935



HOW ABOUT EPIC?



OPEN LETTER TO JACKSON



GENERATIONS BY D. T. MACDOUGAL

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PACIFIC WEEKLY CONTRIBUTORS IN THIS ISSUE

DR. D. T. MACDOUGAL, who introduced the epoch-making results of Hugo De Vries in evolution and heredity to American scientists, and later edited his *Species and Varieties*, given as the Hitchcock lectures at the University of California in 1905, discusses the advances made possible by the work of this great Dutch scientist.

SARA BARD FIELD is one of California's most noted poets. Her latest book is *Darkling Plain*.

JAMES MARTIN was until recently a member of the staff of a Los Angeles daily.

WINTHROP RUTLEGE is a San Francisco newspaperman.

G. ARMISTEAD KAUFFMAN is a graduate student at the University of California.

DOROTHY ERSKINE is a research worker in the field of economics. She is the daughter of Dr. Florence Ward, one of San Francisco's first women surgeons.

ALAN CAMPBELL is a music and literary critic who has recently opened a bookstore in Carmel, Calif.

PACIFIC WEEKLY

A WESTERN JOURNAL OF FACT AND OPINION

VOLUME II

FRIDAY, JUNE 14, 1935

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NOTES AND COMMENT

THIS EPIC SITUATION

WHAT really happened at the EPIC convention in Los Angeles last month appears to be a moot question. The significances of what happened appear to be even mooter. The question as to whether or not Upton Sinclair has lost his leadership and whether or not the EPICS are torn by a schism that destroys their own private "united front" continues to be up for discussion.

The discussion, as can be seen by an article by one of the EPIC delegates in this issue of PACIFIC WEEKLY, and by three letters in the correspondence columns, one also by a delegate, begins to center around the intents and purposes of the Communists in relation to a general United Front.

It is evident from it all that some of the EPIC delegates follow Upton Sinclair in his fear of a United Front led by and controlled by the Communists. It is equally evident to other delegates, notably the author of "What Price Democracy?" in today's PACIFIC WEEKLY, that without communion with the Communists, without, in fact, acceptance of the leadership of the Communists, the United Front will fail of unity and fail of purpose and achievement. Lincoln Steffens, schooled in the ways of men and in their frailties, emphatically takes this latter view as evidenced in his "United Front" in last week's issue of this magazine.

Despite what inference may have been drawn from editorial reference to the EPIC convention in PACIFIC WEEKLY last week, this magazine finds itself compelled to sit back and look on without any very definite idea as to what direction Mr. Sinclair is heading or is endeavoring to lead the nine hundred thousand-odd citizens of California who manifested their faith in him last November. Mr. Earl Du Freyne French believes that it is the EPIC leader's determination to take possession of the Democratic Party and make of it a revolutionary party that will uproot the capitalist system and evict it from American soil.

On the other hand, Mr. Al Sessions, one of the delegates from Bakersfield to the EPIC convention, declares in his letter to us that "Upton Sinclair has a plan to set up a collectivist world for the unemployed within the shell of our capitalistic structure", whatever that may mean.

And Mr. Donald Kane of San Diego leads Mr. Sinclair away from the contamination of the "American radical and quasi-radical" and puts him into some category which he doesn't designate by name. He contends that "orthodox radicalism for decades has simply confused the American people".

If we are to accept Mr. James Martin's interpretation of that EPIC convention, the proceedings in Los Angeles and Mr. Sinclair's contribution to them are completely confusing to the nine hundred thousand who voted for the EPIC program last year.

Nevertheless, PACIFIC WEEKLY again dedicates itself to the Cause, and whatever tangible and workable plan may be mutually arrived at for furthering that Cause. PACIFIC WEEKLY again dedicates itself to the job of trumpeting for the hitherto muted voices of the West, be they Epics, Communists, Socialists or just plain men and women who have found no tie that binds them to party or group. PACIFIC WEEKLY pledges itself to battle for a united front, the United Front, if you like, that will be united, uncompromising, determined, in the fight to overturn those forces of economic and social evil which have thrown this country into a shambles of general despair.

In no section of this country do these forces of evil stand so apparently well-entrenched as they do today in California. The battle is here. Whether Mr. Sinclair and his EPICS or Mr. Darcy and his Communists lead us into it is a matter of not so much concern. But what we want is leadership, and leadership of a united front.

UNITED BRAIN TRUST

RECENTLY professionals met, two hundred strong, in San Francisco to form the San Francisco chapter of I. P. A.—Inter-Professional Association—of which Miss Mary Van Kleeck is National Chairman. The meeting was enthusiastic and listened with keen attention to one representative of each profession tell of the problems and needs of that profession. Besides teachers, doctors, dentists, office workers, lawyers, architects, Mr. F. C. McConnell spoke on the effect of the Criminal Syndicalism Law on professional people, and Ella Winter stressed the need of joint action of intellectuals and workers to achieve that which both needed—security. The meeting decided to feature the unemployed professionals, and to stand behind the Lundeen Bill for Social Insurance, and its local counterpart, the Pelletier bill. About half the meeting signed membership cards.

Twenty people were elected from the floor to form a permanent council and the organization will meet at the Women's City Club the last Friday of each month. Further inquiries may be made of Dr. Ruth Shepardson at the Women's City Club.

RATHER SURPRISING

BOOK publishers have never been able to answer the question: "What do people read and why?" It is still a mystery what makes a best-seller and what causes a book to fail.

But one fact has become indubitable. One class of people does read, and avidly buy, books: workers. The sales of litera-

ture in the Workers' Bookshops of California is now more than \$3,000 a month, and this is excluding subscriptions to such newspapers and magazines as the *Western Worker*, *New Masses*, *New Theater*, *Soviet Russia To-day* and the countless other magazines of the art, culture, politics, labor and defense news of the Left. Most of these sales are of booklets and pamphlets selling for from two to ten cents. The sales of Olin's 5¢ pamphlet *Why Communism* has topped 50,000 in California alone (250,000 in the U. S.)

But the Workers' Bookshops are becoming known as selling other books also—"proletarian" novels, books on the Soviet Union, books on planning, economics, books of the Russian leaders and philosophers, and plays and poetry of the Left. Frequently novels are sold in special editions published at a lower price, for the Communist Party. The publishers have begun to realize the market among the workers. A visitor from New York commented recently: "The Workers' Bookshop in New York is like a department store basement on bargain day. It is the most crowded bookstore in New York. The cash register never stops ringing."

And the answer of the capitalists to this phenomenon? They dispatch vigilantes to throw beer bottles through the Bookstore windows.

MUST WE BOYCOTT JAPAN?

Yes.
Why?

Listen.

Sherwood Eddy speaking: "I look upon Japan's rise to a world power as an economic miracle. Thirty-seven years ago, Japan sent her first rusty freighter around the world. Today, she is challenging the world in all fields of commerce, and demanding equality."

But why stop, Mr. Eddy? The stream does flow on. Why did you not continue, saying: "She has capitalized on her limitations, having no natural resources to speak of, and a lower standard of living of her producing class. And there lies her secret: her entire advance has been made on the fact that her working people can exist on infinitely less than their competing white neighbors."

Viciously, the situation is this: Japan has the world checkmate with her lower standard of living. And as long as she is in such a position, she will not raise her standard of living.

What is to be done?

War?

No.

Why?

Listen.

Upton Close speaking: "You can send all the armies into Manchukuo you want, but you can't beat rubber hipboots for seventy-five cents a pair."

Devalue our dollar?

No.

Why?

Listen.

We can peg our dollar down to one cent, and Japan will still be advantageously lower. She graduates her yen accord-

ing to all fluctuations of exchange.

Japan is in no position to be adamant, although she likes to give that impression. Economically, she could not win any war in which she was engaged. At present she has nothing to fall back upon, and she realizes this fact. But she is laying a firm foundation in Manchukuo, anticipating the future with astonishing exactitude.

She is also capitalizing on our limitations, namely, our don't-give-a-damn attitude. The threat of Japan will not become apparent until we give the Philippines her freedom.

Before we resort to boycott, let us make this request: if Japan will raise the standard of living of her producing class, thus throwing her into honest competition with the rest of the world, we will grant her equality as she will have earned it.

If she refuses: boycott.

G. ARMISTEAD KAUFFMAN

OPEN LETTER TO JACKSON

Mr. HAROLD V. TALLON,
Secretary, the Amador County Chamber of Commerce,
Jackson, California.

Dear Mr. Tallon:

You folks in Jackson have had a great deal of trouble during the past eight months. Union labor in the Argonaut, Central Eureka, Original Amador and Kennedy gold mines went on strike last October for better wages. Since that time, there has been continuous strife.

The mine owners, instead of undertaking arbitration, announced from a safe distance in San Francisco and Oakland at the start of the affair that the mines were to be closed. You gentlemen of the Chamber of Commerce were highly incensed about that, for the very life of the city of Jackson depends on those mines.

So, when the Argonaut and the Original Amador resumed operations in February, the "patriots" of Jackson (including, doubtless, many men in your Chamber of Commerce, Mr.

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Tallon) formed the "Citizens' Protective League of Amador County". Sheriff George Lucot hastily deputized all of the members, and you raided the strikers' headquarters, burning a tent, chairs, tables, and even an American flag which had flown over the headquarters. Since then, the strikebreakers have had your protection. A few weeks ago, you chased an American Federation of Labor representative out of town.

You are probably proud of yourselves for "safeguarding business". The strikers—your fellow citizens—are close to starvation, but you, the "vigilantes", have "restored order"—by denying the union workmen their legal right to picket peacefully.

Maybe you were justified. I'll not argue about that, since you do not recognize the legal rights of people unless those people furnish you monetary profit.

But I will take occasion to show you that you have taken away from yourselves a tremendous amount of good American business.

The miners, formerly getting an average of \$4.63 per day, asked an average of \$6 per day. About 600 men went on strike for those better wages.

Now, suppose you, the members of the Chamber of Commerce of Amador County, had sided with the miners who, after all, are your own people. (The owners of the mines live in other and larger cities, spending very little money with you, merely taking as their own what you dig out of the ground.)

If you were to insist that the miners get what they demand, you would bring into your town of Jackson \$822 more per day, or about \$246,600 per year!

You would be thrilled no end if some new company were to build a factory in Jackson and offer a payroll of that amount. You would think the millennium had come. Jackson would have such a boom as it never had before.

Yet, when you have a chance to seize for your town that tremendous amount of new business, you form a "vigilante" committee to keep that business out of Jackson.

And don't think the gold companies couldn't afford it. Let me offer some figures given to the newspapers by the Argonaut Mining Company, Ltd., the owner of the Argonaut mine.

The Argonaut ran until October 1, 1934, and piled up a profit of \$315,189, out of which income taxes had to be paid. The Argonaut officials estimated there would be about \$290,000 to pay stockholders their 1934 dividend.

Why, gentlemen, the Argonaut alone could pay the whole increase in wages for all the mines and still make \$43,400—more than four times its profit, which was \$9,843. And remember that the Argonaut ran only about eight months. If the mine had run a full year, it would have made about \$435,000 after taxes were paid, and would have been able to pay the increase in wages for all the mines with about \$188,400 clear profit—more than nineteen times its 1932 profit! Yes, the mines could afford to pay what the miners asked.

Figures talk, Mr. Tallon. Ask any of the 2500 people in your town what they'd think of having \$822 more per day to spend with the merchants. Ask the merchants how they'd like to have that business pour into their stores. Ask yourself if you wouldn't get your salary raised if you were to bring all that money into Jackson.

Then, if your brain is not atrophied, ask the other members of the Chamber of Commerce why in the name of common sense they formed a "vigilante" gang to drive that huge fortune away.

Sincerely,

PETER GOODWIN

LINCOLN STEFFENS SPEAKING--

THE JAPANESE are coming out for Northern China and we civilized nations are sorry; we are so busy with troubles of our own that we cannot save the Japanese and the Chinese from theirs. Fortunately the excuse the Japs suggest for their conquests shows that the Chinese are learning to deal in a fundamental way with their own troubles. It's war to the Japanese but it's revolution to the Chinese, to the government of China and to us.

THE BIRDS on my place are all married and nesting, but they go on in pairs making love or quarreling or something ever after. They draw lines too. The other day a couple lighted on a wire, two others lit on the same wire. Then a third bird flew in between the two couples and away they went. Very pointed. The single or lone bird looked cut; evidently felt cut, for he stared after the couples as if he couldn't understand it. We wouldn't do that; we would pretend not to care or even to notice such a slight.

THERE'S AN EXCUSE for Hearst and the so-called capitalist newspapers to fake and "fix" the news, none for the "red" journalists. The facts are "red" enough. History is going the "red" route everywhere. All the radical papers have to do is to report it as it happens. The other papers have to change it more or less to make it readable to their readers but still it leaks. The old belief that journalism CAN be literature is true only in the radical press.

I CAN'T be contemptuous of Upton Sinclair as the "Reds" are; he does things that I would recently have done and evidently thinks thoughts I only just have got over. When he moves over into the Democratic Party he joins a majority which will be proud to do never so little for us. They cannot do much; President Roosevelt and his backers are finding they cannot do the little they tried to do. I know from the best of them that they almost see that; they are bitterly disappointed. Upton Sinclair must know that from the very same men. He should have known that of old. He did learn it of old. He once remonstrated with me for the very conduct I wonder at in him and I was as guilty then as he is now. He now is leading his followers back and he is as sincere as they are. They are beginning to need what he wants or wanted. No, Upton Sinclair sees the need of ALL.

And he joins and would lead a party that proposes so little. I have learned—hasn't he?—that it is easier, safer, less cruel to take all. They beat us on small propositions. But the difference between the big change in Russia and the gradual change in Germany brings it home to all men. This is all known to Sinclair whom I cannot despise or disrespect. He knows as well as an intellectual can about this game and remain an intellectual. But there is one more step to take and that is to get over being an intellectual as Lenin did. He went on learning until he got over wanting all what he and the intellectuals wanted and rubbed it into his bones that Labor and the peasantry needed everything. And that human society had to see that they had all in order that even the best of men could think straight. Lenin grew up to a point where, when he thought a thing, he knew and Labor learned that that was

what the human race had to have.

Now as to the United Front which we were talking about. Sinclair is for it if only the Communists are left out and his reason is that they do not "believe in democracy". They do believe in democracy, not in our political democracy but in the more vital "economic democracy" which they are founding and winning in Soviet Russia. Which we must go out for here. Everything that we have got politically and in constitutional law we have to go and get all over again because law and politics are no sound foundation for anything. Justice, liberty, peace have to be reestablished upon an economic foundation. Hard to do, but it has been done by the Communists in Soviet Russia and the way to do it, the exact steps taken and to take here are known to the Communists here. I don't see how Sinclair can think of doing anything in his line and mine without arranging to have the experimental knowledge of the Communist Party on call every step of the way.

OUR LONDON correspondent writes that the Germans have contrived a silent airplane. The news isn't broadcast, and it isn't certain yet. It isn't known how it's done; mercury is the guess. But the torpedo machine will be right over you before you know it. Another step toward getting nice people behind the front. Maybe, after all, war will stop war and we won't have to use our brains.

THE FRENCH are beating Fascism. Not sure, but it looks that way. Well, if the French can do it, the English can, and if the English can, maybe we Americans can. The halting thought is that the English may not want to, as the French seem to. The French seem to dread Fascism so much that they are turning in numbers to the Communists. Yes, they are making the Communist Party there French by joining it. Wonder if we couldn't make the Communist Party American by pouring into it and working from within. Let's watch the French. I wish our papers would report France better.

JOHN STEINBECK, the unimportant writer (he doesn't like to be called important; bad enough to be a writer) can write almost anything. He gets easily any effect he tries for: vagrancy, mysticism, the love of the land, the soil, the hills. He is an artist because he isn't for art: keeps his eye on the things he likes; keeps it off his picture. The picture is for you. Ever try that? Grass and flowers, hills and the ocean do it that way, and they do get their effects. Even by chance they do it.

ANNE MARTIN—Jane Addams' Anne Martin—who used to live here, writes in a most unchristian rage at my poor little paragraph about the Great Comforter of Chicago. Anne Martin missed my meaning, so others may; as Jane Addams would not have. Having remarked in my personal sorrow that the beautiful mistress of Hull House was gone I regretted her failure. Anne Martin says she no more failed than Jesus did. Well, I have often regretted His failure too. My hope was that we humans would have no more such beautiful individuals till we have built a beautiful habitation where their sweetness could bless, not hundreds, thousands or even millions, but ALL the people.

Just the same I am ashamed to have hurt Anne Martin with my blurred sense of waste.

THE KIDNAPERS, as caught, bear witness that as in business, in general the problem of their lives is distribution. They could make a fortune but they didn't know how to spend it: a common experience.

REVEILLE FOR INTROVERTS

BY SARA BARD FIELD

Not East or West, not North or South,
Not up or down, forever in and in
Wastelandward where black alkali of drouth
Begets no rooted life, the cullied mind
Continues like a self-predestined mole.
No, not a mole. Though his fur-stifled sight,
Like star-points blurred in winter cloud is thin
He grasps with all else his substantial dark.
This delver in vacuity is blind
Of nose and tongue, of fingertip and ear:
Clover and honey, eiderdown and lark
Annihilated. In his airless hole
No morning and no evening and no night
Approach on breeze or shadow while the birds
And sensitive leaves and swollen-uddered herds
Cry their dear names. Far from earth's granite stones
And varied rainbow treasure of their crust,
A poisoned well is sunk, the fossil bones
Of Minotaur and Hydra (hero-slain
To lessen tragedy of human dust)
Are resurrected from the noxious ground.
They rend the honey-combed, ingenious brain
Leaving their senseless victims body-bound
To babble and inhale their black in vain.

Escape the self-coiled labyrinth while yet
The sun is drumming reveille and still
The moon recasts the golden-knotted net
And trawls for such as your deep sunken will
To draw it in the lofty tidal flow.
Beseech the whale for ambergris or steal
The gum from trees. Beg honey-bees for wax.
Take clay from building swallow, oakum or tow
From hemp and spurge-flax. With these calk and seal
All inward-snaring, life-betraying cracks.
Stand in the middle of four towered day
Choose one direction from the pointing leaves
That stem the final twig in every way.
Then keep your flying path and though it lead
To Sirius or wren nest in your eaves,
To boreal herb or austral banyan root,
The wind that lifts you will not let you stray.
You will return with basketfuls of fruit,
Bulged bags of gold long years can not consume,
Medicaments for bruised and fevered need;
Your vial filled where Bimini's drooped trees
Shade disappointed Ponce de Leon's spring;
Your aegis and your cestus woven bloom,
Your eyes an astral lamp, your lips a lute;
Your feet space-free on the Hermaic wing
And in your hands the Power of the Keys.

GENERATIONS

BY D. T. MacDOUGAL

THE number of kinds of living things—bacteria, mushrooms, snails, ferns, fishes, seaweeds, butterflies, beetles, trees, snakes, palms, flies, birds, antelopes, grasses, cats, elephants and sunflowers—runs into millions. Then the fossilized remains in the rocks of species no longer living runs into similar large numbers. It was recognized long ago that these fossils were mostly of extinct species and that it was possible to relate them to the forms of life now living. It would be difficult to say with any exactness at what time the conception first took form that the living things we know were derived from fossil ancestors or by evolution. In fact, there are but few great ideas which may be tied definitely and finally to any one time, place and person.

Paragraphs in Aristotle's writings may be construed to imply an understanding of organic evolution. Equivalents doubtless may be found in Sanskrit and in the work of the Chinese sages. It was first given place in modern thought and life by Charles Darwin about 75 years ago. Darwin attributed the origin of the later species from earlier ones by natural selection of strains or lines of descent different from the general run of the species. Nearly related forms were depicted as competitors and if the survivor in this struggle was different from its ancestors a new species resulted. Such a proposal naturally led to the keenest discussions in which scientists, humanists, sentimentalists and theologians joined with an acridity not easily understandable. The implied relentless action in the "struggle for existence" threw the entire matter into an emotionalized field in which keen examination of facts was extremely difficult to carry out. This discussion became extremely bitter when the biologists assumed that man was as completely subject to the laws of nature as any other animal.

If 98 per cent of the books and other contributions on origin of species, evolution and heredity written in this period were burned nothing would be lost. The greater number of authors concerned themselves chiefly with logical refutations of adversaries' opinions. Nothing could be more fruitless than such debate. The scientist is prone to sniff at the "die-hards", "kiver to kiver" stand-patters on the interpretation of constitutions, scriptures, charters and all fundamental documents, but when his own stratified prejudices are questioned he is apt to be quite human and even peevish, as anyone may see if he jars the brown and hardened honey-combs that fill many laboratories.

I can recall that the small audience of scholars from Columbia University and other New York institutions at which I had the honor of introducing to American science the preliminary experimental results of De Vries in heredity as affecting evolution broke up in disorder, scandalized by such radical departure from accepted theories. Today but few are so prejudiced as not to recognize that the presentation of these results in the Hitchcock lectures at the University of California in 1905 was the beginning of a new period in research on the method by which qualities are handed down from generation to generation, and how changes may occur resulting in the founding of new species.

With the recent death of Prof. Hugo De Vries, the great Dutch botanist of Amsterdam, there came to an end an illustrious career during which notable contributions were made to our knowledge of evolution of new forms of living things

and to the mechanism of heredity. Late in the nineties Prof. De Vries, whose studies in physiology had contributed to the fundamental facts as to osmosis in cells and in other physical happenings connected with life, turned his attention to the evening primroses (*Oenotheras*), not primroses (*Primula*). He saw in plantations of this ornamental plant taken over to Holland from America, that seedlings developed into mature plants differing widely from the parental forms. These differences were designated by him as mutations or departures from the parental form by units or definite steps or measurable qualities. These two ideas were henceforth to be the two main pillars of the science of the generations.

Prof. De Vries' studies of these ideas were hardly under way in 1900, however, before he and other workers came upon a brief treatise written 35 years earlier by Gregor Mendel, who by growing sweet peas in the monastery garden at Bruenn had seen color patterns and other characters behaving as units in hybrid mixtures of these attractive plants and upon the basis of the observed facts had formulated the conception of unit characters only a few years after Darwin's momentous declarations, and had seen that some characters alternate in inheritance, that is when the parents have two qualities in the same field they do not fuse in the offspring, but one dominates and the other becomes recessive.

De Vries thought he saw new forms or species arising by mutations in the evening primroses and in their behavior an exemplification of the origin of species. This interpretation was not correct in so far as these plants were concerned but his fruitful experiments and his forceful exposition of them in lectures and books constituted a ferment which started intensive researches engaging some of the best minds of science for a third of a century. The origin of other kinds of plants and in animals by indubitable mutations was observed by some of these workers. It cannot be assumed that all species have originated in this way. This is one way in which some have arisen and others may arise. Origination of new species is doubtless occurring all about us frequently.

Naturally the scientist as an inveterate realist sought to connect unit characters, such for instance, as color of eyes or hair, mental traits, flower markings, size of seed, etc. with discrete particles of protoplasm in sperm and in egg-cells. It had long been known that the vehicles of heredity were the chromosomes or elongated irregular strands of dense material to be seen in reproductive and other cells.

The chromosomes may be visualized, and in fact are capable of examination under the microscope, as strings of irregular beads. The union of the two elements of germ plasm means the fusion of these beads. The fusion, however, does not include all of any bead. Preliminary to the fusion the beads are split or divided so that after the union takes place chromosomes are formed of which the beads are no larger and of the same number as the parental form. When, for example, the halved-beads carrying eye-color come together the two are not blended: one is suppressed and one is expressed by the offspring.

Now from the vast complex of knowledge of heredity we may mention one more basic feature, that of linkages, or inter-effects of qualities carried by one bead or gene in a strand upon another in a separate bead. These linkages or hook-ups are

varied in character and definiteness.

Once the rudiments of the above conceptions had taken form there dawned the possibility of interfering with the action of the chromosomes by experiments in which some of the beads might be changed and the characters they bore modified. As a pioneer in this field I tested the effects of injecting compounds of the heavy metals into the ovaries of plants in 1905. Hundreds of egg-cells were destroyed, but of the surviving eggs a few developed into seeds which grew into plants unlike the parental form. Other and more skilful workers, using various agencies such as X-rays, heat, etc., have carried out researches in which unit characters and their linkages have been modified in a very striking manner.

Prof. De Vries' main discoveries were made after he had reached middle age. He lived to see the movement he had started put to use in breeding plants and animals, and the arrangements for studies in genetics in every institution in which biology receives serious attention. Beginning with evolution and heredity as matters for speculation, which in itself was held to be profane, irreligious and dangerous to society (the terms and ideas implied were not to be expressed by my friends in the Universities of Russia as late as twenty years ago, and a chilly welcome greets them in other places in America outside of Tennessee today), I cannot recall ideas in any field of science which have gained a foothold so speedily or which may so profoundly affect human life as those activated by De Vries.

De Vries plucked evolution from the realm of futile discussion and made it a subject pertinent to daily life and a subject for experimental research. That he misapprehended the behavior of his plants in the beginning recalls the apt paraphrase to the effect that the army of science in its marches into unknown territory often builds bridges of theory over widely yawning chasms, and after its troops, horse and foot, and

artillery have marched across it and are operating on the farther side it is discovered that the timbers of the bridge were unreal and inadequate, or in brief, that the bridge did not exist. New territory was attained, however, and the fact that the bridge was a mirage makes our present position in genetics no less secure.

Much is made of the extent of our control of natural forces, utilization of materials, and comprehension of the universe. But an understanding of the action of genes is perhaps more important than that of the nature of cosmic rays, the behavior of chromosomes nearer to our lives than the properties of any metal, and no alloys with whatever magical properties could realize the limitless possibilities of directed combinations of germ-plasm by which the destiny of the race might be directly determined.

That any progress will be made in this matter seems very doubtful in view of the scant welcome accorded the findings of eugenics. The improvement of dairy stock, developments of improved strains of long staple cotton or a rust-resisting wheat receives more attention than the matter of fine humans. Any proposal for interference with physical life, from vaccination to vitamins, has encountered prejudice, active disregard and antagonism. For not all the fossils are securely imbedded in rocks: many walk about, some sit in high places, and may at any moment make gestures raising storms of prejudice and sentimentalism to the detriment of generations to follow us. We deal ruthlessly with animals and plants useful to us, improve our methods of dealing with the world, but leave the matter of our own progress to the fates. The evolutionary development of the human race has probably been relatively less in the twenty-five thousand years since Cro-Magnon man than that of the horse which he ate so freely, or the dog which soon became our devoted companion.



WHAT PRICE DEMOCRACY!

BY JAMES MARTIN

I HAVE learned something of great value, something I am not likely soon to forget because it was forcibly impressed upon me. As a delegate to the first state convention of the End Poverty League, Inc., called for the purpose of "democratization". I have learned that democracy, like liberty, is paid for in eternal vigilance. And, even then, we sometimes learn that the price has been subjected to inflation.

Upton Sinclair, the EPIC leader, called this convention a "school in democracy". After three hectic days of fighting for elemental principles of democracy on the floor of the convention, I have come to the conclusion that the "school" must have been patterned after that other Democratic machine, Tammany Hall.

Mark Twain once wrote: "In our country, we have those three unspeakably precious things: freedom of thought, freedom of speech, and the prudence never to practice either." Sinclair and the bureaucratic satellites of the End Poverty

League to the contrary, notwithstanding, these words might have been written descriptive of this convention. Certain it is that freedom of speech and freedom of thought were hamstrung throughout the conclave via the medium of a political machine directed by those EPIC officials who sat on the platform in Los Angeles' Labor Temple during the three days of May 17-18-19.

Immediately after the opening of the convention, I was considerably alienated when I heard Richard S. Otto, retiring president of the League, refer to Sinclair as a "second Jesus Christ". However, I dismissed the gesture as one of friendship, confident that most of the delegates did not want the production-for-use movement elevated to any such astral plane.

Then Sinclair himself sounded a false note, which should have warned me somewhat as to what to expect. During his opening speech he plumped, with very slight reservations,

for the candidacy of President Roosevelt in 1936, saying he felt sure EPIC forces would support Roosevelt "because we believe he is better than anyone Wall Street will select (?) and because we, as sensible people, believe that half a loaf is better than none."

We were asked to accept Roosevelt on the ground that Sinclair said Roosevelt had promised him last September 5 that he, the President, would come out for production-for-use before October 25. To a great many of the delegates, who remembered the sabotage of Sinclair's gubernatorial campaign by the Roosevelt forces, this seemed a little too much like licking the boot that kicked you.

When Sinclair finished his opening speech, he nominated Sheridan Downey as permanent chairman. Someone on the platform seconded the nomination, another moved the nominations be closed, and in the general hubbub Richard Otto, temporary chairman, declared Downey elected. There were a few cries of "railroading", but most of the delegates were too dazed by this rape of democratic procedure to protest.

By the afternoon session, a number of the delegates had recovered their breath from this audacious railroading and took the floor to protest a motion that the temporary credentials committee, composed of appointed district secretaries, be made permanent. After numerous attacks against this procedure, Sinclair took the platform to state that "only district secretaries know the viewpoint of the delegates". He also said that a credentials committee could not be elected from the floor because delegates had not been properly seated, although he assumed that personally appointed delegates could function even though not properly seated.

The motion carried, however, and so did another motion to have Sinclair appoint the committees on policy, constitution, etc.

Sinclair had previously said; "This movement is yours—you must run it." Yet I and many other delegates were amazed when he took the stage to speak for the appointment of these committees, instead of the democratic, self-governing principle of election from the floor.

Downey also attacked this democratic principle, voicing an argument which sounded perilously akin to fascism.

"We must proceed beyond democracy," he said, "to help a suffering state."

Another revelation as to the extent of "democratization" that was going on in the convention was the question of the agenda. The afternoon of the first day a delegate asked that the agenda be read, and Chairman Downey contemptuously said: "So-and-so's the next on the program, and that's the agenda."

Inasmuch as even the Republican National Convention submits an agenda to its delegates for possible modification and adoption, I and many other delegates were dumbfounded and then disgusted as the convention progressed. The agenda was never read at any time during the convention, save that on the second day Sinclair said: "We have to take up the constitution and the raising of money for the League and for the *Epic News*—take that for your agenda."

The morning of the third day a resolution to have the agenda read was unanimously adopted, but Downey promptly forgot it.

It was painfully obvious that the convention had been called to rubberstamp decisions already arrived at by the End Poverty League bureaucracy. And, as many delegates remarked, to "democratize" the indebtedness which Sinclair incurred during his gubernatorial campaign and for which he alone

was legally liable. On Sinclair's authority, the indebtedness of the League was \$15,000 and will probably be more in the near future.

The financial angle was never very far away throughout the convention. On two occasions the "hat was passed" and a resolution was passed calling for twenty-five cents per month dues from the club members. Sinclair "plugged" the sale of his books many times, including his latest, *We People of America and How We Ended Poverty*. *The Epic Song*, *Epic News Reel*, *Jungle* film, and many of his books were cited by Sinclair at frequent intervals, each time with the price named.

A résumé of the financial "plugs" seems to confirm what I learned after the convention, in regard to Sinclair's personal attitude toward the End Poverty League. By reliable authority, Sinclair has frequently stated (privately, of course) that the End Poverty League exists primarily for the purpose of selling and distributing his books and other publications. In other words, the League exists for the capitalistic purpose of making money.

Saturday morning, the second day, a bombshell burst in the convention when the credentials committee reported, that, although there had been "minor disagreements", it had been agreed to seat all delegates. Louis Rose, first EPIC supporter in San Francisco, arose as a member of the committee and charged that approximately 100 delegates had been "packed" in as delegates by the League bureaucracy, their only credentials being slips of paper reading: "Okay, so-and-so."

Forty or fifty delegates jumped to their feet and demanded to be heard in protest. Complete pandemonium reigned as Downey retired to the back of the stage to consult with other officials. Otto was hurriedly dispatched for Sinclair, who was not in the building.

Someone moved that the credentials committee report be adopted, and Downey put the question to a vote. Although the "noes" obviously were greater than the "ayes", Downey declared the report adopted and refused to call a standing vote.

Sinclair was rushed breathlessly to the platform at this juncture. He immediately jumped into a "red-baiting" speech.

"I know there are improperly seated delegates in this convention," he said. "Communists are here to break up our convention. I have seen Communists voting in this convention and I know that what I say is true because I know them personally."

Sinclair called out the name of a delegate and asked him if he were a Communist. Upon receiving a negative answer, he said weakly: "Oh, I had been advised you were."

"We are going to find a way to throw the Communists out," he continued. "They will not be allowed to vote in this convention."

At this moment, a motion to rescind the motion accepting the report of the credentials committee was carried almost unanimously. Subsequently, this report was never again brought on the convention floor, thereby illegalizing the whole proceedings. Sinclair never made good his threat to "throw the Communists out".

A delegate told me he rushed on the platform following Sinclair's "red" attack and accused him of using the same tactics on delegates opposing his personal will as were used against his EPIC candidacy by William Randolph Hearst, Harry Chandler and other capitalists, namely, that of calling all opposition elements Communists. This delegate demanded that Sinclair allow the delegates whom he branded as "reds", to defend themselves from the platform; or else point out these

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Communists he said he knew and have them thrown out; or else make a personal apology from the platform.

Sinclair's reply to this demand, he said, was: "Why, that wouldn't promote harmony."

Two other weapons were used by the League bureaucrats to gain control of the convention. One was the use of Sinclair's popularity to over-ride the voiced sentiments of delegates by making personal "appeals" to do as he said. Another was the complete disregard by Chairman Downey of the most rudimentary elements of parliamentary procedure.

Delegates who had been marked as "insurgents" were refused recognition by the chair; anonymously shouted motions to strangle discussion were recognized by Downey and put to a vote; motions made from the gallery of spectators were accepted and put to a vote; standing votes were but rarely carried out, despite repeated demands from the floor, and no roll-call on a vote was ever permitted.

Downey excused himself by saying that, although a lawyer, he didn't "know parliamentary procedure". Subsequently, Paul Bruns, lawyer connected with the League and numerous other "crackpot" organizations, was made parliamentary advisor, but this failed to have any effect on the further rape of democratic procedure.

The "democratization" apparently was supposed to be confined to the new constitution of the League. This constitution, which does not and cannot affect in any way the articles of incorporation for the League, chiefly confines its democracy to the election of a board of directors from twenty-one districts by vote of the members of the clubs. But this board of directors elects an executive committee of three, with complete executive powers, from within or without its ranks!

Sunday morning several amendments were proposed and carried, chiefly toward further democratization to recall and referendum clauses. At this point, Sinclair was overheard to say to Downey: "For God's sake, don't let them make any more amendments!"

The paramount issue before the convention was that of the United Front of all anti-capitalist organizations. This question was finally forced on the floor for debate on Sunday afternoon, after a petition for a United Front Labor Ticket, bearing 67 signatures of delegates, was presented before noon of the second day to the policy committee. Support of this measure subsequently reached a total of 134 delegates.

In the debate the United Front was defended in cold, clear logic by Ben Legere, of the San Francisco Council of Democratic Clubs, who told how the United Front had worked with perfect cooperation in San Francisco. He cited Roger Baldwin, national executive of the American Civil Liberties Union, who has pledged himself for the United Front, saying that the only reason Communists appear to be dominant is because the other groups have not been as active as they should be in defense of the movement.

John C. Packard, local A. C. L. U. attorney; Downey, and Sinclair attacked the United Front with emotional arguments on the ground that it is a "Communist maneuver".

Downey's sixteen-minute harangue developed only the statement that "we have a United Front, and it is Upton Sinclair".

Almost hysterically, Sinclair said: "I appeal to you mothers in the audience. A mother nourishing a child at her breast cannot cut its throat. This United Front is publicly avowed to the purpose of cutting the throat of our movement."

"The Communists are there for our destruction. They call us Social Fascists, which is democracy. You have to choose be-

tween democracy and the destruction of democracy. The way to avoid fascism is to talk democracy, and have nothing to do with groups that are against democracy."

Despite agreement that vote was to be taken immediately following the debate, Sinclair postponed it on the ground that his national broadcast was to follow in fifteen minutes. Following the broadcast, he again violated the agreement by making a personal plea before taking the vote.

"I appeal to you," he said, "to avoid entering into agreements with organizations which would discredit our movement."

Then he deliberately sabotaged the question upon which the debate had been centered by making a substitute motion, as follows: "I move that we form a United Front with all sincere democratic groups that believe in democracy."

Of course, the motion carried unanimously, but there was strong sentiment among the delegates against the political stratagem Sinclair used to avoid the real issue. Many delegates including myself, represented EPIC clubs which have for some time been cooperating in United Fronts, and have never been "contaminated" in the slightest way by contact with the Communists in the movement.

Sinclair's speech for the National Broadcasting Company was even more outspoken in its capitulation of the EPIC movement to orthodox capitalist politics in general, and to President Roosevelt in particular.

"If President Roosevelt will come out for our cause—fine," said Sinclair into the microphone. "If he won't we will go to the democratic convention with a pledge from our people for a production-for-use candidate. Let me make this clear. That won't do President Roosevelt the least bit of harm because he does not stand the slightest chance of failing to carry the democratic nomination.

"If President Roosevelt comes out for production-for-use—all right. If he doesn't, we will vote for him anyway!" (Italics mine.)

This broadcast was supposed to launch a movement for National Epic. Actually, it sounded more like a bid for political favor from Roosevelt, a bid for a political "cow-trade", such as Huey Long might make for his Louisiana machine.

As to "National Epic", any conceived plan of political capture of the Democratic Party machinery in, let us say, the Tammany Hall area, or Louisiana, or the domain of the Chicago wardheelers, seems to me to be nothing short of day-dreaming. It just can't be done. And I don't imagine Postmaster Farley will submit tamely to EPIC encroachment either.

Summarizing the hectic events of those three days, I would say Sinclair and his End Poverty League henchmen succeeded in capturing the convention, but that this victory will prove the most costly one he could have achieved. A large bloc of delegates, of which I was one, was completely disgusted and disillusioned by the convention and may be expected to repudiate Sinclair's leadership if he continues in his present fatal tactics. I do not think this repudiation will be disastrous for the movement. In fact, the fight of employed and unemployed against the increasingly fascist tactics of the capitalists, will be materially strengthened by such a desertion.

I have formulated my impressions of the convention, and its relation to the working class who followed Upton Sinclair last fall, into somewhat of a credo. I believe it outlines fairly well the correct line which we, who believe capitalism is out-

moded and must die, should follow in the future.

I am firmly convinced:

That Upton Sinclair, Sheridan Downey, Richard S. Otto, et al, are not nearly as important as John Jones, Mary Smith, Henry Doe, etc., the rank-and-file of the EPIC movement.

That if this "top leadership" is not responsive to the demands of the rank-and-file, as it most certainly was not in this convention, it should be repudiated as soon as possible, and rank-and-file leadership, the natural leadership which inevitably asserts itself in times of crisis, should be substituted.

That the United Front of all anti-capitalist groups and organizations is the only weapon which we, who produce all and have nothing, can use successfully in our fight against the capitalists, who own everything and produce nothing.

That this United Front is an immediate and compelling necessity to halt rapidly encroaching fascism and war being promulgated by the capitalist class.

I further believe that this is a credo which can be and shortly will be subscribed to in one form or another by the rank-and-file membership of the EPIC movement in California.

THE THEATER

HISTORY RELIVED

BY WINTHROP RUTLEGE

THE more alert of San Francisco's moviegoers this week are slipping off Market Street and up McAllister to the President to see the Soviet Film *Chapayev*. They are being more than repaid for their efforts, first because they find *Chapayev* a more exciting action film than *G Men*, and second because they thrill to the realization that what they are seeing is not merely a cooked-up scenario but rather a terrific slice of re-enacted, relived history.

The film tells the story of the flaming career of the embattled peasant from whom it gets its title. Young America thrilled to tales of Marion, Sumter, Pickens, Lee and other intrepid rebel raiders who grappled with the minions of imperialism in our own revolution. In much the same manner, Young Russia must be inspired by the saga of *Chapayev*, whose daring little army never found a mob of White Guard Cossacks too tough to tackle, even though it had the combined approval and much of the force of world imperialism behind it.

It is the story of the Civil War that followed the Russian Revolution, the record of a period full of fire and blood, of death and desperation. It was the period during which the debris was being cleared away for the building of the first unit of the new world society. The Whites had many brave fellows in their ranks, men who died "grandly", as the military historians say, and fought with a ferocity born of desperation. But they fought against the tide of history and they were doomed. They fought for an archaic and crumbling tradition and they were irresponsible looters and pillagers.

Chapayev and his men, however, were struggling to establish the world of tomorrow, the world in which hunger and the fear of hunger are banished and in which free men and

women hold their heads high. They wore the responsibilities of the pioneers of the new life; they accepted and enforced a discipline supplementary to those responsibilities. They forbade looting and they won not only the villages they wrested from the Whites, but the peasants in them.

Chapayev, as portrayed by Boris Babochkin, is a fellow whose stature measures full up to the requirements of the saga. Blonde and blue-eyed and with waving moustachios which alternate between ferocity and sly humor with startling mobility, he blows through the story to the complete engrossment of the spectator. Reckless in battle, uncompromising with his foes and illiterate in education, he nevertheless shows amazing flashes of gentleness and understanding. The scene, just before his death, in which he tells his two young machine-gunned (a lad and a girl) what a fine place the world will be after the revolution, is one of the memorable ones in the film.

In technique and mechanical perfection, too, the Russians are moving along. Whatever they lack in quality of materials they make up with lively and often thrillingly beautiful imaginativeness. The battle scenes are the kind that etch themselves upon the memory of the spectator. The scene in which the stiff white phalanxes march into the red machine guns is rich in symbolical significance. It is the essence of a traditional society breaking because it cannot bend.

Sergei and Georgi Vasilyev have accomplished a gem of direction. The mass movements in the picture are what the better of Hollywood's directors have striven for, only to be defeated by the weaknesses and the contradictions of their source material. They have not, moreover, made the artistic error of painting the whites too black and the reds too white. The scenes at Cossack headquarters are done with nice restraint, but the irony is all there.

To the revolutionary this picture is recommended because it tells the sort of story he wants to hear and tells it inspiringly. To the moviegoer who does not care (poor benighted chap!) about the sociological significances, it is recommended because it gives him an action story, better done than any of our "westerns", in which he will not be irritated by "propaganda". And it has a happy ending, too—the revolution wins.

BOOKS

CREATIVE PLANNING

BY DOROTHY ERSKINE

SCIENCE lies at the heart of the whole rationalization movement," writes Professor Robert A. Brady*. He writes of Germany. What makes this book of extreme value is that it indicates trends everywhere. He is writing about us. We see our society laid bare. Science is at work with Things—shaping, organizing—and also agonizing. We see how Fascism has inevitably come to be. Brady scarcely mentions it but he does not have to. We understand why men continue the wearisome disputes over Marx. They do not do it to be perverse.

*THE RATIONALIZATION MOVEMENT IN GERMAN INDUSTRY, by Robert A. Brady. (University of California Press, 1933) \$5

No! Something is driving them to formulate these ideas. Let us get at the driving forces. That is what Professor Brady does. This book is better than countless partisan pamphlets. It reminds one of Hardy's great drama (never meant to be acted) called *The Dynasts*. There, one looks down as from heaven upon the map of Europe, and sees the chancelleries of each nation, and the armies marching against Napoleon. There are humble soldiers dying in the snow in the retreat from Moscow—humble wives, little children, and kings—the whole drama. So with this book. We look down upon human society without emotion. There is feverish activity; great effort; great changes from year to year to year. Strange little beings building with frantic intensity. It makes sense if one forgets one was ever a part, having a certain nationality and class and color and a bundle of traditional prejudices. Yes—looked at as Robert Brady might—it has a grandeur and clarity that is medicinal to our harassed and quivering sympathies. But I am telling what it did to me. That is not quite fair. Facts—hard, well-knit reasoning—have at times a cumulative passion. You get that in Marx. The incisive sentences, the amassed material of Brady do the same trick. His intellect is exciting. But in case you don't read the book—which would be indeed a pity—what are some of these facts so deftly laid before us?

Post-war Germany and Soviet Russia have carried farther the principle of rationalization than have other nations. Rationalization is industrial and economic efficiency on a large scale. It is science in management. It is planning. It is the logic of machinery and cooperation. The smooth and uninterrupted flow of various raw materials through the various stages of production and into the hands of consumers has gradually forced horizontal and vertical integration. Large scale enterprises have increased. Transportation systems have become endless belts connecting every plant and process. Laboratories have been linked to factories.

Experience during the war greatly strengthened the centralizing forces. Gaining a "place in the sun" required powerful fighting organizations. These were found in huge industrial combines, market controlling cartels, monopolies. Numbers of large industrial enterprises became linked directly with the State through supply of goods to army and navy—for instance, steel, chemicals, ship building. Inflation wiped out the bonded indebtedness of big corporations, ruined the middle class, caused the concentration of property in a few hands. (Germany now appears to be ruled as a semi-feudal state by a number of great industrial magnates.) Inflation was followed by a tremendous effort at re-organization. It was a desperate attempt to rebuild capitalism and insure profits to the owners of industry. Rationalization was planning for separate businesses but was not a long range scheme for the nation as a whole.

Krupp could no longer make guns. All the iron and steel industry was reformed into a giant combine, vertical and horizontal, controlling coal mining, coke making, distribution of gas, chemicals, iron smelting and steel making, the manufacture of machinery and even the retailing of many commodities. So much for steel. Electricity followed. There emerged one great electric monopoly, Siemens. It is centrally controlled but plants are individually managed. It has enormous laboratories, research centers and technical schools. It has a foreign alliance with General Electric and Westinghouse for exchange of patents, the results of research, for special trips of engineers, scientists and managers, and the standardization of manufacturing methods. As to power—only 13% is

now distributed through private companies. There is a bold plan for a single electric network covering every section of the German State. Thus, seasonal and peak loads could be harmonized—water from the Alps and Upper Rhine creating electric power in spring and summer or made from coal in the autumn and winter. At present, there are financial obstacles but every step taken along lines of integration compels even larger units, greater cooperation and decisions of more social significance.

Nor can electricity be rationalized and extended without affecting transportation. Trains carry more coal than anything else. If gas goes by pipe and electricity by wire—what will the trains do? The State owns the railroads, post and telegraph. It has almost a monopoly of air lines. There is one bus line and one line for river shipping. The North Deutscher Lloyd and Hamburg American Line control 85% of shipping. Transportation is co-ordinated to avoid overlapping and waste. The chemical industry is highly rationalized. There are a few large companies. There has been a pooling of patents, business experience and processing methods. Research and laboratories are maintained in common. Duplicate plants have been eliminated and the chemical industry is integrated with coal, steel, oil, agriculture, medicines, textiles, moving pictures, etc.

No branch of economic activity is left unaffected by rationalization. There is a change in the professions. For example: State medicine, factory hospitals, and large clinics. There are apartment houses with city heating and laundries. Banking, brewing, book-binding, and building are all affected. This is what Brady says of education: "Changes in informational data is revolutionizing the system. Specialization of information along industrial and scientific lines is bringing schools into closer and closer physical contact with the larger industrial enterprises. It is quite conceivable we are about to witness the transformation of the greater part of the educational plant into industrial enterprise, taking the form of specialized institutes now so common in the U. S. S. R."

But the end is not yet. What makes this analysis so fascinating is the way in which it serves to explain why we have the political line-ups and the economic philosophies that are agitating us today. When rationalization spreads from the small business to the nation, directors of great industries are really political potentates and the enterprises they dominate are principalities. When the State becomes a gigantic business—that State calls for its business manager or dictator, and his advisers are the heads of various important industries. Rationalized industry does not well subject itself to democracy. *Laissez-faire* is gone for good in Germany. It is desired neither by capital nor labor; industry nor commerce; trade nor agriculture; consumer nor producer. There is a struggle for power it is true. If the owners of industry are in power—this rationalization will be for their profit. To the laboring class it is synonymous with exploitation. Nominal wages increase but not real wages or annual earnings. Rationalization is no solution of crises nor has it solved the problem of distribution. The issues are only sharpened, not reconciled. If labor has power there will also be a dictator. The problem of co-ordination and integration—in a word, the problem of long range planning calls for the exercise of centralized and dictatorial powers. Labor will uphold some form of socialistic planned economy. But the logic of large scale enterprise frets for solution at two important points. It seeks to break national boundaries. There should logically be regional specialization. No country in Europe is self-sufficient. "Nationalism

is an historical anachronism," says Brady. He also says that "labor" is the strongest international force in the world today. The other point at which rationalization is balked in Germany is in outmoded property rights. Agriculture cannot be put on a truly modern and scientific basis while land is held in little private parcels. As to industry, central co-ordination will probably mean transfer of ownership rights, either to the central government or to regional groupings of workmen.

The present owners of German industry, in a last mad effort to preserve their property, have found it essential to control the State in whose name so much property is already held. However, the sweep of economic forces expressed through rationalization and economic planning are driving political power into the left wing. "Rationalization is revolutionary," says Brady, "its techniques, ideas, points of view and aims involve a radical departure from the past. It is a bold attempt to bring all human activity under the direct management of the human agent. Cooperation is essential. This is not possible without a common set of objectives. Dominating plans must be social in character. In the U. S. S. R. rationalization is raised to the level of a national program capable of completely abolishing poverty."

This is a book for the fearful to burn. It is a book to own, read and pass on. Therein lies the hope that it may "rationalize", to some small extent, our own conflicting mental processes.

AFTER TWO YEARS

THE KING OF THE GREAT CLOCK TOWER. Commentaries and poems by William Butler Yeats. (Macmillan) \$1.50

(Reviewed by Alan Campbell)

IN THE brief preface to his most recent volume Yeats implies a great deal: approaching his sixty-ninth year the poet felt somewhat alarmed that he had written nothing in over two years, so he decided to force himself to write, then take advice. The present volume of hardly fifty pages was the outcome, and just before it was completed, Yeats "went a considerable journey partly to get the advice of a poet not of my school". This poet (whose identity Yeats does not reveal) was not in the mood to discuss literature but there was an eager "disciple" on hand, who, after pigeon-holing Phidias, Shakespeare and Dante as corrupters of their respective ages, condescended to read Yeats' fragmentary manuscript, and his sole comment was "Putrid". "Then I took my verses to a friend of my own school," continues Yeats, "and this friend said 'Go on just like that. Plays like The Great Clock Tower always seem unfinished but that is no matter. Begin plays without knowing how to end them for the sake of the lyrics.'"

The lyrics of Yeats' little play are pleasant and undoubtedly in performance it would prove a most acceptable curtain-raiser. There are five characters, two of whom chant their lines, plus all the accoutrements of "symbolic drama"—gongs, drums and masks. And there is some poetry exquisite enough to justify one's reading *The Great Clock Tower* several times, though the immovable masked Queen and the prophetic stroller whose decapitated head sings through one of the chanters is all rather confusing.

But if the play is thin and a trifle disappointing, still, no lover of Yeats' work can afford to miss the charmingly intimate commentary that follows. In this commentary he discusses in admirable prose his attempts to recreate the music

of the ancient and mediaeval worlds when "It seemed that everybody had but one set of ears and that it is now possible to have two sets that cannot be pleased at the same time."

The commentary to "Parnellite At Parnell's Funeral" deals with four events which Yeats designates as the Four Bells which closed the sixteenth, seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in Ireland. It is a bit scholarly with its references to the Huguenots, Battle of the Boyne and the Royal Dublin Society, but the first note of the fourth bell—the mysterious falling of a star as Parnell was buried, should interest all who are curious about the relation of elemental phenomena and human events.

Three Songs to the Same Tune are offered to a government or party that would undertake to seek unity of culture not less than economic unity.

Meru is the most significant of the group of Supernatural Songs: the commentary upon these poems includes an interesting association of early Christian Ireland with India.

The King of the Great Clock Tower is a book that would read aloud to advantage. Touching upon such points as Indian mysticism, Irish history and the music of the twelfth century it is a tempting stimulant for perusal of ideas. Its prose passages reveal a mind richly endowed with the knowledge of life's gentler beauties.

CORRESPONDENCE

SAYS REPORT UNFAIR

Editor, Pacific Weekly,

Sir:

Your report of the Epic Convention seems very unfair. Sinclair's real crime is that he broke with orthodox radicalism, which for four decades has simply confused the American people. I know you cannot understand all the implications of this in a moment, but at least you could make an effort to be fair on reporting the matter; and you should try to learn enough about the radical movement so as to have no need to conceal your ignorance under a cloak of partiality to Communism—for how do you expect ever to build up a first rate journal in this fashion? America has long been condemned as an ignorant nation. The American radical and quasi-radical is no exception to the rule. You are behaving very Americanly.

San Diego

Donald Kane

SEES COMMUNIST BIAS

Editor, Pacific Weekly,

Sir:

As a subscriber to Pacific Weekly I want to say that I find your well-printed magazine extremely interesting and stimulating. I note, however, that the usual communist bias creeps into some of your editorial comment. Specifically, I refer to the June 7 issue's reference to the EPIC convention.

I attended that convention as a delegate from the Bakersfield Epic Club and was in the thick of the activity there. My impression was that Upton Sinclair left that convention stronger than when he went into it. If there were eighty delegates, as you report, who favored the formation of a third

party, and who constituted a substantial "left-wing" revolt against Sinclair, I failed to spot them. Even on highly controversial issues, the opposition vote to Upton was negligible.

A false impression is left by your statement that "Upton Sinclair 'ran' it, not allowing crucial issues to come to a vote." In fact, it is entirely untrue. The fact is that it was entirely within the power of the delegates at all times to accept or reject Sinclair's suggestions. In nearly every case his suggestions were accepted by unanimous vote. Even on the "united front" issue, Sinclair merely proposed a substitute motion—and it was carried by a tremendous majority. You can call this leadership, but you cannot call it steam-rolling. The accounts of the convention appearing in recent issues of the *Western Worker* are ridiculously biased.

Upton Sinclair has a plan to set up a collectivist world for the unemployed within the shell of our capitalistic structure. He fears Fascism, and he doesn't think that we have time for the laborious business of building up a third party. He believes that it is easier to capture the machinery of an old party. Now you may think this is all very tame and illogical, and you can honestly disagree with him, but it is very poor taste, to say the least, for communists to sneer at him as a "social Fascist" and a "betrayor of the workers".

Upton Sinclair, despite any mistakes of judgment he may have made, has done more for liberty and enlightenment in the world than any hundred of his communist critics.

I am a believer in free speech, and although I disagree with the communist tactic in America, I have defended at all times the right of communists to preach their doctrine. But I know, too, that fear of communism, whipped into a frenzied issue by the Hearsts, is one of the steppingstones to actual Fascism. That is largely why Sinclair opposes the united front with Communists. Another reason is—and I ought to know, for back in 1920 I was a member of the Communist Labor Party and got arrested for it—that the Communist Party in most instances winds up its "uniting" by DIS-uniting, and then taking whatever windfall that may be left.

As far as I am concerned, I'll stick with the author of *The Brass Check*, and I suggest that he add another chapter devoted to the "class angling" of news in the pages of the *Western Worker*.

Bakersfield, Calif.

Al Sessions

Editor, Kern County Union Labor Journal

SCOFFS AT COMMUNISTS

Editor, Pacific Weekly,
Sir:

In your May 31st issue, Lincoln Steffens wonders why Sinclair blocked the united front at the Epic convention, May 17-19. Naturally, I cannot speak for Sinclair, but I can speak for a good bloc of the Epic movement in San Diego County on the subject of united fronts, and think I can suggest the other side of the question—there are two sides, you know.

First, where there are fundamental differences of principle there can be no unity in any sincere sense of the word. Mr. Steffens seems to assume that the United Front (his capitals) is an absolute entity, and a thing good in itself. It is not. On the contrary, it is a mere means to an end, and meaningless unless the end is taken into consideration. The results which the united front attempts to achieve alone make it worthwhile.

And what does the united front attempt to achieve?

On the surface it hopes to avoid war and fascism. This, ap-

parently, is its ultimate goal. Underlying this apparent goal, however, is an altogether different result which it is endeavoring to achieve: the prime mover of the united front, namely the Communist Party, hopes to popularize itself and its doctrines through uniting with other groups—hence the union is converted into an opportunity to proselyte and preach its own private doctrines. You can deny this if you wish, but I propose to prove both goals are, in a revolutionary sense, of doubtful value, and deserve to be rejected by any forthright revolutionary.

To begin with, the only way on earth to end the danger of fascism is to abolish capitalism. This means revolution of one sort or another. Merely to protest against fascism, though good propaganda no doubt, if you are merely a propagandist, is patently foolish from a revolutionary viewpoint. For as long as we have capitalism, we are going to be threatened with all the curses of capitalism, of which fascism is only one. Therefore, smash capitalism—destroy the source of this capitalistic curse.

And do the Communists propose to smash capitalism? Not that I ever heard of! All they do is protest against capitalism, demonstrate against fascism, and advocate a hodgepodge of reforms which, if put into effect, would preserve capitalism. The American Communist Party is not revolutionary—it is revolutionistic. It is a propaganda society. It is a body of Martovs and Plechnovs. It does not aim at revolution, for it does not understand what revolution is. To the American C. P. revolution is a thing that happened in Russia which you can read about in books. In a fashion it has become a literary creation. In another way it has become a series of speeches, and demonstrations, and meetings, and united fronts—in brief, a pose, which in reality is a substitute for the revolution—a soul-satisfying thing that is good in itself, which must ultimately preserve capitalism through its own self-deception.

And likewise its propaganda. Its doctrine is a marvelous one if you wish merely to preach revolutionism. If you have the savior complex and are too intelligent to accept the Christian's God, then here you will find peace—but you will not find revolution.

And if you are a revolutionist, you will not even find peace in the United Front. Moreover, you will not join the united front except to bore from within, using it as an opportunity to attack these mock revolutionists. And in our case, we cannot waste time in this fashion; we cannot afford to waste our energies arguing with these self-deceived, would be saviors of the American people. Fascism is a danger today. And the weaker capitalism becomes, the greater will be the danger. The only way to save ourselves is to smash this insane system which has subordinated all values to the gold standard, to property. And this is our job: we are not saviors of America. We are America, we are the American people; and it is for us to choose whether capitalism shall be smashed or continued. And that choice, thanks to economic determinism, demands the abolition of capitalism.

Today our lives are being thwarted by an order which is no longer adequate. Men can no longer own the tools of livelihood, therefore equal opportunity and initiative has become a mere phrase. Until we again own the tools of production, we are sentenced to exist in misery. Therefore we propose to end poverty and unemployment through production for use, which itself implies the abolition of capitalism. We are thus for something, and not merely agin something. We have a positive program, rather than a mere protesting negation.

Sinclair was right, whatever his private reasons, when he

said let the Communists unite with us. If they and their protesting colleagues are really interested in defeating fascism, then let them join the Democratic Party, learn something about revolution, and go to work in earnest. If they are not; then don't expect us to waste time attending their mutual admiration meetings, for we do not admire them, and we would not admire ourselves if we took them seriously.

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